

1548/5927



Mr. *Caner's*

S E R M O N,

On the DEATH of our late most gracious
Sovereign

King GEORGE the SECOND.





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*Joyfulness and Consideration ; or, the Duties
of Prosperity and Adversity.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached at King's-Chapel, in *Boston*, before His Excellency

FRANCIS BERNARD, Esq;

Captain-General and GOVERNOR in Chief,

The Honourable His Majesty's COUNCIL
and House of REPRESENTATIVES,

Of the Province of the

Massachusetts-Bay, in New-England,

JANUARY 1, 1761.

Upon Occasion of the DEATH of our late most gracious
Sovereign

King GEORGE the Second.

By HENRY CANER, A. M.

Minister of said Chapel.

BOSTON : NEW-ENGLAND ;

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Order of His Excellency the GOVERNOR, and
both HOUSES of ASSEMBLY.

In the House of REPRESENTATIVES,

JANUARY 2, 1761.

Voted,

THAT the Members of the Town of *Boston*, with such as the Honorable Board shall join, be a Committee, to give the Thanks of this Court, to the Rev'd. Mr. CANER, for his Sermon preached before them Yesterday, upon the Decease of our late most gracious Sovereign King GEORGE the Second, and desire a Copy thereof for the Press.

Sent up for Concurrence,

Attest, ROLAND COTTON, *Cler. Dom. Rep.*

In COUNCIL, January 2, 1761.

READ and Concurred, and JACOB WENDELL, JOHN ERVING and WILLIAM BRATTLE, Esqrs. are joined in the Affair.

A. OLIVER, Secr.

Consented to,

FRA. BERNARD.

Copy Attest.

A. OLIVER, Secr.



Joyfulness and Consideration, the
Result of Prosperity and Adversity.

ECCLESIASTES VII. 14.

*In the Day of Prosperity be joyful, but in
the Day of Adversity consider : God also
hath set the one over against the other, to
the End that Man should find nothing
after him.*

WE have lately been celebrating,
with loyal Hearts (I trust,) as
well as joyful Acclamations,
the Accession of his present Majesty King
George the Third, to the Throne of these
Kingdoms. --- May these Ceremonies be
a Prelude to the Felicities and Glories of
his Reign ! which God grant may be
long

long and prosperous, over a free, a willing and obedient People !

Doubtless we have the fairest Prospect of Happiness that any People can reasonably desire. We have a Prince who is a native of our Country, born and educated among us, with a high Sense of the Excellence of the English Constitution ; to whom therefore we may reasonably confide, that the Interest, the Honour and Privileges of it will be very dear ; and from the Sweetness of whose Temper and Disposition, the Brightness of his Capacity, and the Goodness of his Heart, we may hope to find every Instance of Favour and Indulgence, that the Happiness of his People shall at any Time demand. --- This great Blessing is an Exemplification of the former Part of the Text, and seems to warrant that Chearfulness and Joy, which every English Heart has exerted in Honour of his Inauguration.

It is now Time to recall our Reflections to a Subject more severely solemn ;
to

to drop a Tear to the Memory of our late gracious Sovereign King George the Second; to recollect the Glories of his Reign, the Wisdom of his Counsels, the Success of his Arms, his inflexible Attachment to the true Interest of his People, and his unwearied Endeavours to promote their Happiness : And by these Reflections to excite in our Hearts a deep and christian Sense of the wise and righteous Dispensation of Heaven towards us. --- This is a Subject which the latter Part of the Text will assist us to make a right Improvement of.

For doubtless amidst all the Blessings and Favours we are permitted to enjoy, it may be consider'd as a Day of Adversity, wherein the Providence of God calls us to such royal Mourning, to lament the loss of our Head, our Royal Master, the political Father of his People, under whose Shadow Experience had taught us to form Hopes of Safety. --- Both Parts of the Text therefore seem to concur in affording

fording Matter fuitable to our present Circumstances ; the Wisdom of divine Providence having blended our present State with an Occasion both of Joy and Consideration.

And in Truth these Duties how contrary soever they may seem one to the other, are not such irreconcilable Opposites, but that they may very well agree in the same Subject, and be exerted upon the same Occasions.---For what is there in the great Duty of Consideration, that is misbecoming a Time of Prosperity ? or inconsistent with a rational Joy ? Or how indeed should we be duly thankful to God for the many Favours and Mercies he pours forth around us, unless we reflect seriously upon the Nature, the Circumstances and the Value of them ? 'Tis true that which the World calls Joy, but which is rather an unbridled Riot, or a licentious Mirth, has very little to do with Reflection. Consideration is a killing Damp to the Unruliness of Prosperity, and therefore the Sobriety and Gravity of it cannot be

be endured. And yet if we will take the Judgment of Solomon *it is better* i. e. it is more improving *to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting*; and his Reason is, that this is an Event common to *all Men*; the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the honourable, and the Men of low Esteem; for all are alike interested; *and the living* of what Quality or Condition soever, *will lay it to Heart.* i. e. will consider and improve by it.

But it may be ask'd, when should we be joyful, if not in a Day of Prosperity? when all our Affairs are successful, when our private Interests are secure and flourishing, and the public Transactions are happy and well conducted? It looks like Ingratitude to God, not to relish his Favours, or even not to rejoyce, when the Mercies and Blessings of Heaven are multiplied towards us--- It does indeed look so--- And Solomon has accordingly not only given us Licence to rejoice and be glad when we are in happy Circumstances, but wills and commands it as a Duty incumbent upon us, the Result of Wisdom and Religion.

But

But here without proper Caution we are liable to two Mistakes. One is, that of misjudging our State, and esteeming that to be a Time of Prosperity, which is either the Reverse of it, or at best a Mixture of both these States together. The other regards the Nature of that Joy which we are encouraged to express.

In the mean Time it may be allow'd that there is such a Time as Solomon here speaks of, a Time of Prosperity; and that Joy and Gladness, when rightly understood are suitable to such a Season. And on the other Hand we may be in those Circumstances which are here called by the Name of Adversity, and when we are so, we shall at least find that Consideration is very proper and necessary to such a Season. The Preacher tells us, that *God hath set the one over against the other*; that is, we may perceive in the World a perpetual Vicissitude of these two States, succeeding one another, Joy and Sorrow, Prosperity and Adversity like Day and Night alternately prevailing; And I think the Preacher might have added, that they are oftentimes blended together,

gether, and unite in the same Times, and in the same Subject. *To the End that Man should find nothing after him ;* * nothing (that is) to object to the Equity or Wisdom of the divine Dispositions of Providence.

Both Parts of the Text therefore as I said, are nearly adapted to our Condition. For certainly neither this nor any other Nation under Heaven had ever greater Reason to rejoyce and exult in the Presence and Protection of God, in the numberless Blessings we enjoy, and in the noble Prospects that are before us ; And yet in the midst of all this flow of Happiness, it has pleased the Sovereign Disposer of all, to cast a Damp upon our Joy, to call us to Mourning and Lamentation, to visit us with a sore Visitation ; for such is the Loss of our late gracious Sovereign, whose Death we this Day deplore.---- While therefore the sprightlier Scenes of Prosperity

* Tho' the Sense which I have given of these Words appears to me the most consistent and intelligible, yet it must be confess'd there is some Difficulty in them which Interpreters have variously explained. Maldonate's Gloss, Melancthon's and others may be seen in Bp. Pat. Annot. in Loc.

Prosperity do strongly solicit our Regards, let this Stroke of Adversity suspend at least our Joys, and teach us the great Duty of Consideration.---You see in this Instance how easy it is for God to change the Scene, and turn the Current of his Blessings, and consequently how necessary it is for us to labour after a sanctified Use of this Visitation ; to beg that God would continue to us the remaining Mercies and Favours we enjoy, that he would heal the Breach he has made by inspiring his present Majesty with Wisdom and Justice and Fortitude, with every royal Virtue and Accomplishment suitable to his exalted Station.---All this and more will, I am sure, be the natural Result of Consideration if rightly and duly exercis'd.

But before I proceed to the Improvement of this providential Dispensation, suffer me to enlarge a little upon the Nature of these two States or Conditions mentioned in the Text, Prosperity and Adversity, since both of them concur in forming our present Situation.---And,

I. As

1. As to Prosperity. This in the usual Acceptation of it, and so far as it relates to public Affairs, implies a happy Form of Government or Constitution in general ; and as a Consequence of it, Wealth and Power, Extent of Dominion, and an Abundance of People. A Nation is then said to be prosperous, when the Subjects of it are numerous and increasing, when its Limits are sufficient to contain and support them ; when it has a flourishing Trade, the Ballance of which is greatly in it's Favour ; when it has Plenty and Peace throughout its Borders, or at least is sufficiently armed to resist any one who shall attempt to interrupt it's Repose ; to encroach upon it's Borders, it's Trade or it's Liberty. When it's Prince and other subordinate Rulers are wise and just, and prudent in their Administration ; watchful of the public Interest, and tender of the Liberties, the Priviledges and Happiness of the People. When the Subjects are quiet and peaceable, and obedient to their Rulers ; content with their respective Stations, reverent to the Laws, and chearfully ready at all Times

Times when regularly call'd upon by their Superiors, to contribute their Wealth, and to exert themselves with Hand and Heart to defend this their Happiness against all Invaders, whether they be domestic Enemies or foreign Foes.

Would not such a Nation as this, be accounted great and wise and happy? Is any other thing necessary to the Prosperity of such a Nation as this?----I think there is---Nay, rather I think it is not possible for all these Advantages to concur in any People without Religion: At least there is this presumptive Proof of what I now assert, that never any Nation or People under Heaven, ever did experience all these Advantages without a very high Sense of Religion, and a pretty general Submission to the Obligations of it, Solomon indeed makes it to be the Principal if not the only Ingredient of public Happiness. *Righteousness* (says he) *exalteth a Nation*. And certainly we may say this of it, at least from all Experience, that it is the Root or Foundation from whence every

every Instance of public Happiness arises. 'Tis that alone which can conciliate the Favour of God, from whom is derived all Wisdom, and Strength, and Policy, and Power, and Riches, and Peace, and Protection, and whatever else it is, that any Way contributes to public Prosperity.

So then we find upon the whole, that there is no such Thing as public Prosperity without Religion, because the very Ingredients that compose the Happiness of the Public, depend upon the Favour and Blessing of Almighty God, and these are only promised to the Righteous. I shall not need to quote many Passages out of that Variety with which the Scriptures abound, in Proof of what has been now observed, since you very well know that the whole Tenor of God's Covenant with the Jews, to make them a great, a wise and powerful Nation, was absolutely suspended upon the Condition of their Religion or public Virtue. *If ye keep my Commandments, --- if ye observe my Statutes, --- if ye hearken unto me ; --- then will I give*

give Peace in your Borders ; --- your Enemies shall flee before you ; --- ye shall be the Head and not the Tail ; --- your Land shall yield her Increase --- I will feed you with the Flour of Wheat --- The Fig-Tree and the Vine shall yield their Strength. --- Your Flocks and Herds shall multiply exceedingly. --- These Terms were eventually made good, for though God did not always take the whole Forfeiture (as indeed he is not strict to mark Iniquity) yet their Prosperity as a Nation, always bore Proportion to their Obedience : And whenever we find the Sword, or any other Judgment let loose, and prevailing against them, there was always a proportionable Deviation from the Statutes which had been commanded them : That is to say, there was a general and public Defection from God and Religion.

All this you'll say is true --- But how does it appear, that temporal Prosperity or the contrary are the Conditions of a religious or immoral Conduct under the Gospel, whose Terms relate only to spiritual Rewards and Punishments, and those chiefly in a future State.

The

The Objection is certainly of little Force, since every Man of the least Observation must have perceived, that the Conduct of divine Providence towards all Nations, from the Beginning of the World till this Time has been much the same.---Tho' their Religion was not always conceived in Terms agreeable to the divine Attributes, or properly expressive of the Honour and Majesty of the supreme Being, yet (as the Apostle says) *the Times of this Ignorance God winked at* ; for where there appear'd a general Zeal for Religion, and a strong Reverence of public Virtue, God was pleased to reward their honest, tho' mistaken Piety, with great Measures of public Happiness. Whoever will take the Pains to trace all the great Empires and Kingdoms of the World, from the Beginning of it to this Day, and observe the particular Periods of their Rise and Declension, will find that they exactly kept Pace with the public Reverence, or Contempt of Virtue ; that is to say, with the Rise and Fall of Religion. --- No Man can deny the Fact, nor will any one (I suppose) pretend that the Argument is not strictly conclusive ; unless he is dis-

pos'd to question whether the Providence of God be at all concerned, in the Advancement or Depression of these great Portions or Bodies of Mankind. And if any one is inclin'd to dispute this, I should chuse to let him dispute by himself.

Religion then as it is the Foundation of public Happiness is likewise the surest Test whereon to found our Hopes of Prosperity, and so far as the State which I have now described or any Part of it may be deemed our public Character, so far we have a Right to pursue the Advice of Solomon to be seriously joyful. --- I say seriously joyful, because according to the Definition before given of Prosperity, the Joy that naturally flows from such a State, will not consist in Riot and unruly Mirth, in Wantonness, and carnal Pleasures, in light and vain Amusements, but in a sober considerate and decent Gratulation of ourselves, and our own Happiness. In Gratitude and Praise to God, for the many Blessings we enjoy ; and particularly that he hath continued to us the Light of his Gospel, the Ordinances of Religion, the Means of Grace, the Opportunities of
public

public Worship, the Assistance and Influence of the divine Spirit, and a Possibility of Reconciliation to God, thro' the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus. --- So then the Joy that is recommended in the former Part of the Text, is not so very different from that *Consideration* which the latter Part of the Words calls for as some may imagine. The Joy that is here required is a religious Thing. It is a pious and grateful Disposition of Soul, express'd in the actual Celebration of God's Praise, both with our Lips, and in our Lives. --- This then is a Day of Prosperity, and this it is to rejoice in it. --- But

2. We should remember that there is a Day of Adversity too ; the Reverse of the former, in which we are likewise interested, and which in the midst of all our Joy, demands the most serious Consideration.

The All-wise God whose severest Dispenfations are just and righteous, and demand the Reverence and Submission of all his Creatures, has been pleased to take unto himself, the Soul of our dear Sovereign

reign King GEORGE the Second lately departed ; at a Time it must be confess'd which according to human Views, may justly alarm and raise our Apprehensions ; In the midst of Transactions the most interesting, that a People can possibly have at Stake. Our Arms 'tis true are gloriously successful, and our national Fame reaches to the most distant Corners of the Earth. But God knows what Change the present Dispensation of divine Providence may produce in the public System of Affairs. Hitherto indeed the Administration has been conducted by a Patriot of as much Wisdom and Integrity, and of as great Abilities, as ever blest the Nation or adorn'd the Court. And we hope and pray that the Union and Harmony which has hitherto subsisted among the honourable Persons who have shar'd in the Administration, may yet continue, and perfect what is still wanting, to the Establishment of a glorious and honourable Peace.

In the mean Time the sudden Arrest of
 this great Monarch by the Hand of Death,
 the

tho' he was gather'd to the Grave in a good old Age, should teach us to consider the Uncertainty of all Affairs that depend upon *the Breath of Man*, for *when that goeth forth, he returns again to his Earth, and then all his Thoughts, his Power and Policy perish* ; And leave those whose Hopes were built upon them to Regret and Disappointment. Oh ! *put not then your Trust in Princes, nor in any Child of Man.* What a mortifying Lesson is this to human Vanity, and to human Confidence too ? that all must lie down in the Grave, where as Job says elegantly, *are Kings and Counsellors of the Earth, that build desolate Places for themselves, where also are Princes that had Gold, who filled their Houses with Silver. --- The small and the great are there, and the Servant is free from his Master.*

Where is now the benevolent Prince, the tender Father of his People, the Desire of his Subjects, whose Happiness he delighted to promote ? Who never attempted to invade their Privileges, but was solicitous to preserve to them that Liberty they so justly valued. Where is
now

now the Terror of that Arm which was always readily stretched forth to vindicate the Oppressed, to assert the Rights of other Princes as well as to defend his own, against the Fury of the Oppressor.---Alas! his Glory and Benevolence, his Power and Protection are now no more.---His mighty Deeds and mightier Designs are laid in the Dust. This was a Stroke of Adversity indeed, which tho' his advanced Years, gave but too much Reason to apprehend, yet our Fears were superceded by the stronger Hopes we had entertain'd, that it would please God to spare the Royal Life, 'till the Troubles of Europe were appeas'd.---But it becomes us to submit to the Will and Wisdom of God, to consider and acknowledge his Hand in this Dispensation. *I was dumb, said the Psalmist, and opened not my Mouth for it was thy doing.*

But tho' we are not allow'd to complain of the Disposals of the divine Wisdom and Providence, yet neither Religion nor Reason forbid us to preserve the Memory

mory of our departed Sovereign, or to mention his Name with Gratitude.

In the mean Time, since we are liable to these Disappointments, from the Frailty and Uncertainty of human Life, Let us so consider this Visitation as may lead us to place more of our Confidence in God that Rock of Ages, who liveth and abideth forever. He sits at the Helm and guides the Events and Vicissitudes of this World, to accomplish the Designs of his Providence. We short-sighted Creatures, are apt to despond when Adversity overtakes us, as if we had no Helper ; but if we would take the Advice of Solomon in the Text, if we would consider and reflect, we should cast ourselves upon that God who never faileth those that truly confide in him. God is a wise Governor, who has oftentimes the noblest Views and Designs on foot, which although they are commonly hid from our short-sighted Understandings, yet might be made savingly present by a lively Faith and Trust in his Wisdom Power and Goodness.

Many

Many things appear to us under a Veil, and seem to wear a gloomy Aspect, that bodes nothing but Sorrow, Adversity and Affliction ; yet by Faith and Patience we arrive to see the Veil taken off, and the Mystery of Providence clearing up into Brightness and Sunshine. This for ought we can tell, may be a Blessing God has graciously reserved for us. Our present Sovereign may be destined to improve upon the Model of his Royal Predecessor, and by his princely Virtues adorn the Throne and eclipse the Glory of his Ancestors.

If we were permitted to have a distant View of the several Wheels and Movements of divine Providence, which are secretly employ'd to bring about his Designs, we should then be fully satisfy'd, that every Thing was ordered for the best, and that even Adversity and Affliction do work together for the Good of those, who by serious Consideration are duly exercis'd by them. If a State of Adversity in general, if any severe Dispensation in particular is suffer'd to pass by without this Improvement ; If a serious Course of Reflection

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Your Excellency has a double Share in
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Affliction and Consideration is not apply'd to, and made the means of Sanctification; nothing but a Repetition of Disappointment, Adversity and Misery, can be expected.---If we would rightly improve our late Visitation, and instead of an Affliction turn it into a Blessing, the Method is to hold fast to God, and reverence our Religion, and walk humbly and righteously before him; for by this Means we shall change our Affliction into Joy, our Mourning into Gladness, and our Adversity into Rejoicing; into an uninterrupted State of Blessing and Prosperity.

I have now done with the Text, and instead of any other Application, shall beg leave to address myself,--- First of all to your Excellency, by Way of Condolance upon the Death of our late gracious Sovereign.

Your Excellency has a double Share in the public Grief, both as a Subject, and as having had the Honour to represent the Person of your Royal Master, among

a loyal and very dutiful People ; always firmly attach'd to the illustrious Succession which now fills the Throne of these Kingdoms. One who stands so high in the Favour of his Sovereign, must deeply feel the Stroke to which no British Subject, nor any truly English Heart can be utterly insensible. May your Excellency enjoy that Consolation which descendeth from above, and which is a most sovereign Remedy and Recompence under all the Changes and Chances, the Sorrows and Afflictions of this mortal Life.

A second Portion of the general Grief will doubtless be felt by his Honour the Lieutenant Governor, and the Honourable his Majesty's Council. ---I do not pretend to describe your Loss, or to speak the Worth of that great Monarch, whose Death we now deplore. This is a Subject beyond my weak Endeavours, and is indeed much easier apprehended than express'd ; but I can lament and condole with you upon this mournful Occasion, and beg of God to sanctify to you and all concern'd this Dispensation of his sovereign Pleasure. The Death of a crowned Head

is always a critical Season, and calls for much serious Reflection ; but the Loss we now bewail is more eminently affecting, both on Account of the public State and Condition of our Affairs, and the special Love and Reverence which he had cultivated in the Hearts of his Subjects. I shall not need to recommend it ; I am assur'd that his Memory will long continue to be a tender Subject of your Gratitude.

Lastly, let me apply myself to you the worthy Representatives of this Province, and to you my Brethren in general. --- At the Death of the good King Josiah we are told that *all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him, and Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah*. Rulers and People, Priests and Prophets, united in expressing their Grief for so great and affecting a Loss. I do not intend to draw a Parallel, between that Prince and ours ; I am sensible that there is a wide Difference in many Respects ; but in the Love and Gratitude of their People perhaps they were not unlike ; At least it was the Endeavour of our late Sovereign,

vereign, and his chief Ambition to reign in the Hearts of his People ; and I trust the unfeigned Grief for his Loss will testify that he was not without Success. I cannot say that every Man in his Dominions had this Love for him, or will pay this Respect to his Memory. Every Government will have some discontented Spirits within it, and every Prince must expect some Subjects of less Loyalty and Attachment than might be wish'd : But what Respect soever he may be depriv'd of by some few of the present Age, from whom better Things might be expected ; I am well assur'd that Posterity will do Justice to his Memory, and the Reign of GEORGE the Second will shine in the English Annals with superior Lustre.

King Saul was once apply'd to in a Day of great Distress by the People of Jabesh Gilead, when they were besieged by a cruel and insulting Enemy. The King hearkened to their Request, and gave them effectual Relief. This was not forgotten. It was Saul's Fate afterwards to fall in a Battle he had with the Philistines ; Then it was that the Men of Jabesh Gilead show'd

show'd their Gratitude, several valiant Men of that People at the Risk of their Lives, recover'd the Bones of Saul and of his Sons, from an infamous Exposure to which the Enemy had condemned them. Here was a Proof of Gratitude, that will be a lasting Honour to their Memory. See how the humane Successor of King Saul received the News of this generous Action. *He sent Messengers to them, and said Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed this Kindness unto your Lord, even unto Saul and have buried him. And now the Lord shew Kindness and Truth unto you, and I also will requite you this Kindness.* I need not remind you how readily our late Sovereign hearkened to your Requests in the Day of your Distress ; what effectual Relief and Assistance he sent you, so that you are delivered from the Insults of a savage and cruel Enemy. We must therefore have less Gratitude than the Men of Jabesh Gilead, if we do not venerate the Memory of our departed King, and acknowledge him under God, as our great Protector and Deliverer.

Let

Let me therefore address you in the Words of the Royal David, to these same loyal and grateful People. *Therefore now (says he) let your Hands be strengthened, and be ye Valiant, for your Master Saul is dead, and also the House of Judah have anointed me King over them.* --- Be you comforted my Brethren in likeManner. Your Royal Master is dead, but it has pleased God to preserve an Heir of his illustrious House, who is now set over us. To him let us transfer that Loyalty and Obedience which was so chearfully paid to our departed King.

May the God of Mercies sanctify this Visitation to him, and to all the Branches of the Royal House.

May he long wear the Crown to which he is now advanced, and not till he is old and full of Days resign it for a Crown of Immortality.

May he be directed by Wisdom from above, to go in and out before this great
People,

People, and to rule them in the Fear of the Lord.

May he possess all those heavenly Graces that are requisite for so high a Trust. --- May he become a blessed Instrument for protecting and advancing the Interests of true Religion, for establishing Peace and Unity, that we may serve God with one Heart and one Mind according to his Will. --- And may there never be one wanting in his House to succeed him in the Government of these Kingdoms.

And may we and all his Subjects duly considering whose Authority he hath, faithfully serve honour and humbly obey him, for Conscience sake, according to God's holy Word and Ordinance, through Jesus Christ our Lord; To whom with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and forevermore. AMEN.



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